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UNCLAS ATHENS 000184

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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JUSTICE FOR EPSTEIN, HERRUP

E/O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: GoG Announces Day of Remembrance for Victims of  
Terror

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY.

11. (U) The first Sunday in January has been selected as the official day of remembrance for the victims of terrorism, Marietta Yiannakou, the Education and Religious Affairs minister, announced on January 17. Yiannakou, who has also proposed that such a day of remembrance should be recognized via constitutional amendment, said that an upcoming presidential decree "shall designate the ways, the procedures, and the events that would depict the wish of the legislators for a day of remembrance for the victims of terrorism," the "Apogevmatini" daily (pro-government) reported on January 23.

12. (U) Yiannakou also spoke to reporters following a memorial service for the victims of terrorism organized by the "Thanos Axarlian" Association on January 22. (Axarlian, a 22-year old student, was killed by shrapnel during a 1992 rocket attack by November 17 terrorists to assassinate then-Finance Minister Paleokrassas. The minister survived.) Responding to questions after the service, Yiannakou underlined that "terrorism has been a phenomenon since ancient times; claiming that [terrorism] has been eradicated and won't reappear does not become a politician." (Note: Poloff and the British Ambassador also attended this yearly memorial service, which was attended by hundreds of supporters, including local MPs and deputy Defense Minister Mihaloliakos. End Note.)

13. (SBU) Comment: Yiannakou's announcement is good news: it focuses attention on the human cost of Greek domestic terrorism. Legislating a day of remembrance for terrorism victims was avoided by the previous socialist PASOK government, which was somewhat sensitive to leftwing and still-popular attitudes that downplay the phenomenon of domestic terrorism, so long as there is a pseudo-political, "anti-imperialist" basis for it.